

el Periòdic News

STATEMENTS ON THE CENSORED EXHIBITION

Gili: "We think we live in an oasis and I wish it were like that, but it is not the case"

The Consul General of Escaldes claims again that the decision was made for security reasons

COMÚ D'ESCALDES-ENGORDANY



Consul General Rosa Gili, today at the presentation of the Plaça de l'Església in Escaldes-Engordany.

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ANDORRA LA VELLA

The Consul General of Escaldes-Engordany, Rosa Gili, broke her public silence this Tuesday morning on the program 'Avui será un bon dia' on RTVA. She did so to defend, without nuance, the decision of the Municipality to cancel the exhibi-

tion 'Censorship is the curator of this exhibition' which was to be inaugurated at the Espai Caldes, and which sought to address the concept of artistic censorship. Gili reiterated that the decision was made for security reasons and assured that, in the same circumstances, she would act in the same way again.

«I'm fine. I would have been

spared all this fuss; this has been going on for five days. I have neither killed nor robbed anyone,» said Gili, visibly affected by the tone the controversy has taken. «I know why I did it and I would do it again,» she insisted. The president defended that her decision was not based on ignorance, as she has recently completed a master's degree in human rights. «I know what freedom of expression, personal rights, the right to information are. I don't claim to be an expert, but I understand freedoms.»

Gili noted that her reaction is conditioned by the international context and the recent episodes of terrorism in Europe. «I am aware of everything that has happened around us in recent years: Bataclan, Charlie Hebdo, Nice, Las Ramblas in Barcelona... I know that in France they are very concerned about radical Islamism. In Spain, the same,» she said. In this regard, she revealed that she had spoken to Andorran security specialists who have given her support: «I don't want to create alarmism, but we have to be aware of what is out there. We think we live in an oasis and I wish it were that way, but it isn't.»

Regarding the cancelled exhibition, Gili reiterated that the Police supported her decision. «There may not have been a terrorist attack alert, but the international context is very tense. Yesterday at the opening

The local leader assures that in the same circumstances she would act the same again

of the Games there were police with submachine guns. Was it in case someone in the audience threw an egg?» she stated ironically, insisting that «I hope I was exaggerating, but I know that's not the case.» Along these lines, she added: "There is no need to provoke. Terrorists don't reason, they wake up one day with a knife and start to act out. I don't think we are strong enough to deal with them."

Gili explained that she did not have detailed knowledge of the exhibition's content until shortly before its opening. "I didn't know about the Museum of Prohibited Art. I had an idea of what it was, but no one told me about a topic that could anger French Islamists." In this sense, she explained that that same day she was at home working on the speech on the accessibility law – the central point discussed that same Thursday at the meeting of consuls – and asked for a list of the works. From there, she started making calls: "I spoke to the head of government, the top police officials, the Minister of Culture, Valentí Closa..."

The consul defended that she acted as the head of a public institution in a small parish in a small country. "The exhibition was on display in La Massana and we were lucky. I have felt quite alone these days," she confessed. And she noted that



Rosa Gili

THE CONSUL GENERAL OF ESCALDES

"I could have an idea, but no one told me about an issue that could make French Islamists angry"

"If removing a painting due to security concerns has to put the political future at risk, it seems exaggerated to me"

the debate is not between art or fear, but between responsibility and risk: "It is like Russian roulette. I don't know if there would have been danger or not, but why do we have to go looking for problems?" She reiterated that for her, "one's freedom ends where the risk to the safety of another person begins."

Regarding the cost of the exhibition, Gili clarified that it was not 50,000 euros as has been said, but 35,000. "Whether we will lose it or not, I don't know. We have to sit down. It is clear that the Municipality will have to pay. The museum didn't leave the exhibition either... but we won't draw blood or fight over it", she declared. She also wanted to respond to criticisms that point to a lack of support for art. «I have always defended it. Art seems very important to me in life. I made a bet with the Caldes project. To say that I am against the art world is to distort reality». And she posed the dilemma: «Of course the terrorists condition us, but, faced with the risk that they could kill your child, do you choose freedom of expression or assume a risk for people?»

During the inauguration this afternoon of the Plaça de l'Església in Escaldes-Engordany, Gili answered questions about her political future, stating that she is not worried: «If removing

ving a painting due to national security concerns has to put someone's political future at risk, I would think it is very exaggerated. I have never had any political ambition whatsoever." In this sense, and questioned by the apologies that have been made by the cultural sector, Gili explained that she apologized «maybe twenty times that day» and that she felt very sorry for everyone involved. However, she defended that an apology does not imply reversing the decision: «I thought that no risk should be taken. It was an intuition».

Finally, and regarding the municipal government team, Gili confirmed that councilor David Pérez continues to be part of the municipal majority - despite his participation in Friday's demonstration - and ruled out any imminent move: «Right now, yes, he continues. I don't want to talk about anyone. In five minutes, I have no intention of dismissing anyone». In this sense, she defended the coherence of her convictions and positively valued the support received from her collaborators, especially Closa, with whom she assures that she shares reflections despite the complexity of the moment: «He is a very good colleague, an excellent politician. These are things that happen». ●

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